



**Carol T. Christ**

CHANCELLOR

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Dear members of the Chancellor's Advisory Committee on Jewish Student Life and Campus Climate,

At our recent meeting, I promised to provide this committee with clarifications and assurances regarding the understanding reached with the coalition that organized the recent encampment on Sproul Plaza. I am also providing written commitments that capture the promises I made on behalf of the campus in support of the needs and interests of our Jewish community. Please feel free to share this communication with members of the community, as you see fit.

Before proceeding, I want to reiterate my appreciation for your forthright communication at what was my final meeting with this essential committee. It is with a great deal of sorrow and empathy that I recognize the challenges faced by so many members of the Jewish community, on campus and beyond, since the horrific October 7 Hamas terror attack on Israel. The ensuing rise in reports of antisemitic expression, including on our own campus, is deeply disturbing. This situation only adds to my appreciation for Prof. Hassner's and Prof. Katz's advocacy in support of new campus programs to provide antisemitism education to larger numbers of students, staff, and faculty. These will constitute major expansions of the work of Berkeley's pioneering Antisemitism Education Initiative, established in 2019.

### **Clarifications regarding the encampment understandings**

What follows is a written reiteration of what I stated regarding the understanding the campus reached with the encampment coalition. First, the commitments that have been made by the campus to facilitate conversations with those who control Foundation and endowment investments do not, in any way, open the door to, or have anything to do with, divestment from entities based on the fact that they do business with or in Israel, or are situated in Israel. I have repeatedly expressed my opposition to any UC-wide, campus, or Foundation policy that would boycott, divest from, or impose sanctions upon Israel.

Second, I want to also confirm that the campus is not undertaking a program-level review of academic programs, academic relationships, or research relationships between the Berkeley campus and educational or research institutions in Israel. The understanding that the campus reached with the coalition reiterates and confirms existing campus policy concerning protected-class discrimination. That policy enables any person who alleges a campus-operated program or activity has engaged in discrimination based on a protected category to make a complaint to OPHD. If a formal investigation then finds discrimination to have occurred or to be occurring, one of the potential remedies for the discrimination can include ending the relationship with the non-campus organization or institution that operates the program in question.

Moreover, I also committed the campus to include representatives identified by the coalition in the group of stakeholders that will be consulted regarding implementation of campus-specific procedures for the [new system-wide anti-discrimination policy](#). I repeat here my commitment to also include representatives that your committee designates as stakeholders in that process. All such consultations are of course ultimately only advisory, and decisions will be made, like in other matters of policy, by

campus leadership. I also want to make clear that there is an important distinction between the development of procedures for anti-discrimination policy, and the actual process for reviewing subsequent complaints. In the latter instance, it is only the professionals of OPHD who will have the power to assess and rule upon the merits of claims of alleged discrimination.

### **Supporting our Jewish community**

In my recent letter to the Academic Senate, I stated that, “disagreements should be based upon an exchange of ideas and not be framed in language that attacks people based upon their identity – antisemitic, anti-Israeli, anti-Palestinian, anti-Zionist, Islamophobic or other identity-based expression.” That sentence was born, in part, of my understanding and profound regret that some of the individuals participating in the encampment and other on-campus protests or demonstrations, have been the source of antisemitic expression, as well as isolated, but still unacceptable incidents of physical violence. Some of these incidents have led to reports of bias and discrimination that have been submitted to OPHD. I want to assure you that the campus administration always takes reports of bias and discrimination very seriously, consistent with our commitment to do all that we can so that every member of our community, no matter their origins or their identity, can feel welcome and respected, and have a true sense of belonging.

I understand and acknowledge that many members of our Jewish community felt deeply disturbed, even unsafe, due to the presence and persistence of expression that was reasonably perceived to be antisemitic. As I wrote in a campus message sent last November, “I have been deeply connected to this campus for more than 50 years and rarely, if ever, have I been more concerned about our ability to abide by and sustain our foundational [Principles of Community](#). These principles enable us to balance the inherent tensions between free speech and diversity of perspectives on the one hand and, on the other, our ability to have a strong community that provides a true sense of belonging and safety to its members, regardless of their identities or beliefs.”

With that in mind, we will, for the first time, invest significant university funding in support of antisemitism education. We have pledged to maintain these budgetary allocations for the Antisemitism Education Initiative for at least five years. We also hope and expect that the director of the Antisemitism Education Initiative will play a key role in the development of the content for the antisemitism education we are promising to provide on a much wider scale than previously - to all incoming students, incoming Residential Assistants, and incoming leaders of Registered Student Organizations.

We are also, as promised, continuing the review of our “Time, Place, and Manner” rules, as we remain unsure that our current approach, particularly in and around Sather Gate, is serving the campus community well.

### **Israel and Jewish Studies**

In addition to strengthening the commitment to antisemitism education on our campus, I want to assure you of our continuing and unwavering support for Jewish and Israel Studies.

In the near future, our Center for Jewish Studies (CJS) will be designated as one of a handful of New Initiative Centers (NICs) at Berkeley. As a NIC, the CJS will, for the first time, have the ability to house endowed chairs and faculty members, and to initiate faculty searches, considerably strengthening the CJS’s stature, influence, and autonomy.

Equally important is the outstanding work of the Helen Diller Institute for Jewish Law and Israel Studies (HDI). It is the largest such program in the country, soon to be strengthened by a new Israel Studies Minor that will begin this fall. We also continue to value our exchanges and relationships with academic institutions in Israel, as well as Berkeley’s study abroad programming in Israel, including the HDI’s flagship exchange program, the Summer Berkeley Global Internship Program in Haifa.

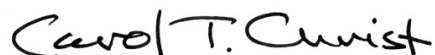
I also want to affirm that we continue to have tremendous respect and appreciation for the Magnes Institute for Jewish Art & Life, the largest Judaica collection on any university campus anywhere in the world. Together, the CJS, the Helen Diller Institute, and the Magnes offer an exceptionally wide and rich tapestry of educational opportunities connected to Jewish and Israeli history, society, and culture, of which our campus should be very proud.

I have shared this letter with Chancellor-designate Lyons prior to sending it to you, and I want to assure you that we are aligned when it comes to these specific commitments and clarifications, as well as, on a more general level, the extent to which we are committed to addressing the needs and interests of Berkeley's Jewish community.

Throughout my tenure in office this committee has been a consistent source of thoughtful, principled, and constructive guidance, ideas, and criticism. I am, and will always be, grateful for your honesty and forthright expression in support of the community you represent, and for your dedication to our university and its most important values. I am cognizant of, and deeply concerned about the toll events of the last eight months—on campus and off—have taken on many members of the Jewish community. You can be confident that there is no complacency among campus leadership on these issues. Instead, there is a great desire to learn from the missteps of the past and a commitment to constant improvement in support of our Principles of Community.

I fervently wish for there to be peace, safety, and respect for all members of our country's and campus's Jewish communities, and for the Israeli and Palestinian peoples.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Carol T. Christ". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Carol T. Christ  
Chancellor